

We Claim:

1. A method of managing ideas, comprising the step of:

(a) maintaining a computer database for accumulating ideas for prospectively patentable inventions, wherein said ideas include needs and requirements of said inventions;

wherein step (a) is combined with one or more of the following steps, to wit:

(b) systematically establishing contractual obligations by contributors of said ideas to the database to transfer property rights to inventions derived at least in part from said accumulated ideas, wherein said transfer is for contingent economic gain; or

(c) providing contingent contractual rights to at least some inventions derived at least in part from said accumulated ideas; or

(d) enabling receipt of contributions of said ideas for prospective entry into said database; combined with

(e) systematically establishing contractual obligations by contributors of said ideas to said database to transfer property rights to inventions derived at least in part from said accumulated ideas to transferees other than contributors of ideas from which said invention was at least in part derived; or

(f) enabling ideas contributed to said database to be integrated within said computer database to thereby facilitate derivation of inventions from said integrated ideas; combined with

(g) systematically establishing contractual obligations by contributors of said ideas to said database to transfer property rights to inventions derived at least in part from said accumulated ideas; combined with

(h) systematically establishing contractual obligations by said contributors to permit immediate public disclosure of said ideas contributed by said contributors; or

step (d) combined with

(i) systematically establishing contractual obligations by contributors of said ideas to said database to transfer property rights to inventions derived at least in part from said accumulated ideas to a proprietor of said database or to a party in concert with said proprietor; or

step (h) combined with

(j) effecting transfer of property rights to inventions derived at least in part from said accumulated ideas to transferees other than contributors of said ideas from which said invention was at least in part derived; or

step (h) combined with

(k) systematically effecting transfer of property rights to inventions derived at least in part from said accumulated ideas to a proprietor of said database or to a party in concert with said proprietor; or

(l) establishing contractual obligations by contributors of said ideas to said database to transfer property rights to inventions derived at least in part from said accumulated ideas, wherein upon establishing said obligations the transferees are not identified; or

step (h) combined with

(m) requiring persons to enter into a membership as a prerequisite for viewing a portion of said database containing at least some of said accumulated ideas; or

step (h) combined with

(n) requiring contributors of ideas for prospective entry into said database to enter into a membership as a prerequisite for contributing ideas for entry into said database; or

step (h) combined with

(o) systematically entering into said database all ideas contributed for entry into  
5 said database; or

step (g) combined with

(p) systematically entering into said database ideas contributed for entry into said database without requiring any contributor of said ideas to have subject matter expertise as a prerequisite for entry of said contributions; or

10 step (g) combined with

(q) facilitating preparation and/or filing of patent applications for at least some of said derived inventions; or

step (h) combined with

(r) requiring contributors of ideas to said database to have subject matter expertise  
15 as a prerequisite for contributing ideas for prospective entry into said database; or

(s) establishing contractual obligations by contributors of said ideas to said database to transfer property rights to inventions derived at least in part from said accumulated ideas, wherein said transfer is for actual economic gain; combined with

(t) selectively entering only some of said contributed ideas into said database; or

20 step (m) combined with step (g) combined with step (t); or

step (r) combined with step (g) combined with step (t); or

step (n) combined with step (g) combined with step (t); or

step (f) combined with step (g) combined with step (t).

2. A method of managing ideas, comprising the steps of:

(a) maintaining a computer database for accumulating ideas for prospectively patentable inventions, wherein said ideas include needs and requirements of said inventions; and

5 (b) systematically establishing contractual obligations by contributors of said ideas to the database to transfer property rights to inventions derived at least in part from said accumulated ideas, wherein said transfer is for contingent economic gain.

3. A method according to Claim 2, wherein step (b) is performed by using at least  
10 one computer.

4. A method of managing ideas, comprising the steps of:

(a) maintaining a computer database for accumulating ideas for prospectively patentable inventions, wherein said ideas include needs and requirements of said  
15 inventions; and

(b) providing contingent contractual rights to at least some inventions derived at least in part from said accumulated ideas.

5. A method according to Claim 4, wherein step (b) is performed by using at least  
20 one computer.

6. A method according to Claim 4, further comprising the step of:

(c) brokering and/or marketing at least some rights under said contingent

contractual rights.

7. A method according to Claim 4, further comprising the step of:

- (e) publishing conditions for sale or license of property rights to said at least some  
5 inventions in said database.

8. A method according to Claim 4, further comprising the step of:

- (e) publishing a history of sale or license of property rights to said at least some  
10 inventions in said database.

9. A method according to Claim 4, further comprising the step of:

- (c) facilitating transfer of at least some of the contingent contractual rights.

10. A method of managing ideas, comprising the steps of:

- (a) maintaining a computer database for accumulating ideas for prospectively  
15 patentable inventions, wherein said ideas include needs and requirements of said  
inventions;

(b) enabling receipt of contributions of said ideas for prospective entry into said  
database; and

- (c) systematically establishing contractual obligations by contributors of said  
20 ideas to said database to transfer property rights to inventions derived at least in part from  
said accumulated ideas to transferees other than contributors of ideas from which said  
invention was at least in part derived.

11. A method according to Claim 10, wherein step (b) and/or step (c) is performed by using at least one computer.

12. A method of managing ideas, comprising the steps of:

5 (a) maintaining a computer database for accumulating ideas for prospectively patentable inventions, wherein said ideas include needs and requirements of said inventions;

(b) enabling ideas contributed to said database to be integrated within said computer database to thereby facilitate derivation of inventions from said integrated  
10 ideas;

(c) systematically establishing contractual obligations by contributors of said ideas to said database to transfer property rights to inventions derived at least in part from said accumulated ideas; and

(d) systematically establishing contractual obligations by contributors of said  
15 ideas to permit immediate public disclosure of said ideas contributed by said contributors.

13. A method according to Claim 12, wherein step (b) and/or step (c) is performed by using at least one computer.

20 14. A method according to Claim 12, wherein step (b) and/or step (c) is performed by using at least one computer.

15. A method according to Claim 12, wherein in step (b) said transfer is for actual economic gain.

16. A method of managing ideas, comprising the steps of:

5 (a) maintaining a computer database for accumulating ideas for prospectively patentable inventions, wherein said ideas include needs and requirements of said inventions;

(b) enabling receipt of contributions of said ideas for prospective entry into said database; and

10 (c) systematically establishing contractual obligations by contributors of said ideas to said database to transfer property rights to inventions derived at least in part from said accumulated ideas to a proprietor of said database or to a party in concert with said proprietor.

15 17. A method according to Claim 16, wherein step (b) and/or step (c) is performed by using at least one computer.

18. A method according to Claim 10 or 16, wherein said contributions enabled by step (b) include on-line contributions.

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19. A method of managing ideas, comprising the steps of:

(a) maintaining a computer database for accumulating ideas for prospectively patentable inventions, wherein said ideas include needs and requirements of said

inventions;

(b) effecting transfer of property rights to inventions derived at least in part from said accumulated ideas to transferees other than contributors of said ideas from which said invention was at least in part derived; and

5 (c) systematically establishing contractual obligations by contributors of said ideas to permit immediate public disclosure of said ideas contributed by said contributors.

20. A method according to Claim 19, wherein step (b) and/or step (c) is performed by using at least one computer.

10 21. A method of managing ideas, comprising the steps of:

(a) maintaining a computer database for accumulating ideas for prospectively patentable inventions, wherein said ideas include needs and requirements of said inventions;

15 (b) systematically effecting transfer of property rights to inventions derived at least in part from said accumulated ideas to a proprietor of said database or to a party in concert with said proprietor; and

(c) systematically establishing contractual obligations by contributors of said ideas to permit immediate public disclosure of said ideas contributed by said contributors.

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22. A method according to Claim 21, wherein step (b) and/or step (c) is performed by using at least one computer.



23. A method according to Claim 21, further comprising the step of:

(c) selling at least some right under said transferred property rights.

24. A method of managing ideas, comprising the steps of:

5 (a) maintaining a computer database for accumulating ideas for prospectively patentable inventions, wherein said ideas include needs and requirements of said inventions; and

(b) establishing contractual obligations by contributors of said ideas to said database to transfer property rights to inventions derived at least in part from said  
10 accumulated ideas, wherein upon establishing said obligations the transferees are not identified.

25. A method according to Claim 24, wherein step (b) is performed by using at least one computer.

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26. A method according to Claim 24, further comprising the step of:

(c) effecting transfer of at least a part of said property rights to transferees not identified upon establishing said contractual obligations.

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27. A method according to Claim 24, wherein said derived inventions are derived from only said accumulated ideas.

28. A method of managing ideas, comprising the steps of:

(a) maintaining a computer database for accumulating ideas for prospectively patentable inventions, wherein said ideas include needs and requirements of said inventions;

5 (b) requiring persons to enter into a membership as a prerequisite for viewing a portion of said database containing at least some of said accumulated ideas; and

(c) systematically establishing contractual obligations by contributors of said ideas to said database to permit immediate public disclosure of said ideas contributed by said contributors.

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29. A method according to Claim 28, wherein step (b) and/or step (c) is performed by using at least one computer.

30. A method of managing ideas, comprising the steps of:

15 (a) maintaining a computer database for accumulating ideas for prospectively patentable inventions, wherein said ideas include needs and requirements of said inventions;

(b) requiring contributors of ideas for prospective entry into said database to enter into a membership as a prerequisite for contributing ideas for entry into said database;

20 and

(c) systematically establishing contractual obligations by said contributors to permit immediate public disclosure of said ideas contributed by said contributors.

31. A method according to Claim 30, wherein step (b) and/or step (c) is performed by using at least one computer.

32. A method according to Claim 2, 4 12, 28 or 30, further comprising the step of:

(e) systematically entering into said database all ideas contributed for entry into said database.

33. A method of managing ideas, comprising the steps of:

(a) maintaining a computer database for accumulating ideas for prospectively patentable inventions, wherein said ideas include needs and requirements of said inventions;

(b) systematically entering into said database all ideas contributed for entry into said database; and

(c) systematically establishing contractual obligations by contributors of said ideas to permit immediate public disclosure of said ideas contributed by said contributors.

34. A method according to Claim 33, wherein step (b) and/or step (c) is performed by using at least one computer.

35. A method according to Claim 2, 4, 12, 28, 30 or 33, further comprising the step of:

(e) systematically entering into said database ideas contributed for entry into said

database without requiring any contributor of said ideas to have subject matter expertise as a prerequisite for entry of said contributions.

36. A method according to Claim 28, 30 or 33, further comprising the step of:

- 5 (c) systematically establishing contractual obligations by contributors of said ideas to said database to transfer property rights to inventions derived at least in part from said accumulated ideas.

37. A method of managing ideas, comprising the steps of:

- 10 (a) maintaining a computer database for accumulating ideas for prospectively patentable inventions, wherein said ideas include needs and requirements of said inventions;

- (b) systematically establishing contractual obligations by contributors of said ideas to said database to transfer property rights to inventions derived at least in part from said accumulated ideas; and
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(c) systematically entering into said database ideas contributed for entry into said database without requiring any contributor of said ideas to have subject matter expertise as a prerequisite for entry of said contributions.

- 20 38. A method according to Claim 37, wherein step (b) and/or step (c) is performed by using at least one computer.

39. A method according to Claim 2, 4, 12 or 37, further comprising the step of:

(e) requiring persons to enter into a membership as a prerequisite for viewing a portion of said database containing at least some of said accumulated ideas.

5 40. A method according to Claim 2, 4, 12, 28 or 37, further comprising the step of:

(e) requiring contributors of ideas for prospective entry into said database to enter into a membership as a prerequisite for contributing ideas for entry into said database.

10 41. A method according to Claim 2, 4, 12, 28, 30, 33 or 37, further comprising the step of:

(e) facilitating preparation and/or filing of patent applications for at least some inventions derived at least in part from said accumulated ideas.

15 42. A method according to Claim 2, 4, 12, 28, 30, 33 or 37, further comprising the step of:

(e) auctioning at least some right under the patent rights to at least some inventions derived at least in part from said accumulated ideas.

20 43. A method according to Claim 2, 4, 12, 28, 30, 33 or 37, further comprising the step of:

(e) recording a time of receipt of each idea contributed for entry into said database.

44. A method according to Claim 2, 4, 12, 28, 30, 33 or 37, further comprising the step of:

(e) recording a time of publication in said database of each accumulated idea.

5 45. A method according to Claim 2, 4, 12, 28, 30, 33 or 37, further comprising the step of:

(e) recording a time of first public viewing from said database of each accumulated idea.

10 46. A method according to Claim 2, 12, 28, 30 33 or 37, further comprising the step of:

(d) providing contingent contractual rights to at least some inventions derived at least in part from said accumulated ideas.

15 47. A method according to Claim 2, 4, 28, 30, 33 or 37, further comprising the step of:

(d) enabling ideas contributed to said database to be integrated within said database to thereby facilitate derivation of inventions from said integrated ideas.

20 48. A method according to Claim 2, 4 or 37, further comprising the step of:

(c) systematically establishing contractual obligations by contributors of said ideas to permit immediate public disclosure of said ideas contributed by said contributors.

49. A method of managing ideas, comprising the steps of:

(a) maintaining a computer database for accumulating ideas for prospectively patentable inventions, wherein said ideas include needs and requirements of said inventions;

5 (b) requiring contributors of ideas to said database to have subject matter expertise as a prerequisite for contributing ideas for prospective entry into said database; and

(c) systematically establishing contractual obligations by said contributors to permit immediate public disclosure of said ideas contributed by said contributors.

10 50. A method according to Claim 49, wherein step (b) and/or step (c) is performed by using at least one computer.

55 51. A method according to Claim 19, 21, 28, 30, 33 or 49, wherein said permission is for immediate public disclosure of all said ideas contributed by said contributors.

52. A method of managing ideas, comprising the steps of:

20 (a) maintaining a computer database for accumulating ideas for prospectively patentable inventions, wherein said ideas include needs and requirements of said inventions;

(b) systematically establishing contractual obligations by contributors of said ideas to said database to transfer property rights to inventions derived at least in part from

said accumulated ideas; and

(c) facilitating preparation and/or filing of patent applications for at least some of said derived inventions.

5 53. A method according to Claim 52, wherein step (b) and/or step (c) is performed by using at least one computer.

54. A method of managing ideas, comprising the steps of:

10 (a) maintaining a computer database for accumulating ideas for prospectively patentable inventions, wherein said ideas include needs and requirements of said inventions;

(b) establishing contractual obligations by contributors of said ideas to said database to transfer property rights to inventions derived at least in part from said accumulated ideas, wherein said transfer is for actual economic gain; and

15 (c) selectively entering only some of said contributed ideas into said database.

55. A method according to Claim 54, wherein step (b) and/or step (c) is performed by using at least one computer.

20 56. A method of managing ideas, comprising the steps of:

(a) maintaining a computer database for accumulating ideas for prospectively patentable inventions, wherein said ideas include needs and requirements of said inventions;



(b) requiring persons to enter into a membership as a prerequisite for viewing a portion of said database containing at least some of said accumulated ideas;

(c) systematically establishing contractual obligations by contributors of said ideas to said database to transfer property rights to inventions derived at least in part from  
5 said accumulated ideas; and

(d) selectively entering only some of said contributed ideas into said database.

57. A method according to Claim 56, wherein step (b), step (c) and/or step (d) is performed by using at least one computer.  
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58. A method of managing ideas, comprising the steps of:

(a) maintaining a computer database for accumulating ideas for prospectively patentable inventions, wherein said ideas include needs and requirements of said inventions;  
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(b) requiring contributors of ideas to said database to have subject matter expertise as a prerequisite for contributing ideas for prospective entry into said database;

(c) systematically establishing contractual obligations by said contributors to transfer property rights to inventions derived at least in part from said accumulated ideas; and  
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(d) selectively entering only some of said contributed ideas into said database.

59. A method according to Claim 58, wherein step (b), step (c) and/or step (d) is performed by using at least one computer.

60. A method of managing ideas, comprising the steps of:

(a) maintaining a computer database for accumulating ideas for prospectively patentable inventions, wherein said ideas include needs and requirements of said inventions;

5 (b) systematically establishing contractual obligations by contributors of said ideas to said database to transfer property rights to inventions derived at least in part from said accumulated ideas;

(c) requiring contributors of ideas for prospective entry into said database to enter into a membership as a prerequisite for contributing ideas for entry into said database;

10 and

(d) selectively entering only some of said contributed ideas into said database.

61. A method according to Claim 60, wherein step (b), step (c) and/or step (d) is performed by using at least one computer.

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62. A method of managing ideas, comprising the steps of:

(a) maintaining a computer database for accumulating ideas for prospectively patentable inventions, wherein said ideas include needs and requirements of said inventions;

20 (b) enabling ideas contributed to said database to be integrated within said computer database to thereby facilitate derivation of inventions from said integrated ideas;

(c) systematically establishing contractual obligations by contributors of said

ideas to said database to transfer property rights to inventions derived at least in part from said accumulated ideas; and

(d) selectively entering only some of said contributed ideas into said database.

5        63. A method according to Claim 62, wherein step (b) and/or step (c) is performed by using at least one computer.

64. A method according to Claim 62, further comprising the step of:

10        (d) facilitating transfer of at least some right under the patent rights to at least some of said derived inventions.

65. A method of managing ideas, comprising the steps of:

15        (a) facilitating contribution of ideas to a computer database for accumulating ideas for prospectively patentable inventions, wherein said ideas include needs and requirements of said inventions;

          (b) facilitating transfer of at least some rights under the patent rights to at least some of said inventions; and

          (c) facilitating preparation and/or filing of patent applications for at least some of said inventions;

20        wherein step (b) is carried out systematically before step (c).

66. A method according to Claim 65, wherein step (b) and/or step (c) is performed by using at least one computer.

67. A method according to any of the preceding claims, wherein each step is performed systematically.

68. A computer readable storage medium(media), comprising computer  
5 executable instructions for causing a computer(s) to manage ideas, wherein the instructions cause the computer(s) to perform the step of:

(a) maintaining a computer database for accumulating ideas for prospectively patentable inventions, wherein said ideas include needs and requirements of said inventions;

10 wherein step (a) is combined with one or more of the following steps, to wit:

(b) systematically establishing contractual obligations by contributors of said ideas to the database to transfer property rights to inventions derived at least in part from said accumulated ideas, wherein said transfer is for contingent economic gain; or

(c) providing contingent contractual rights to at least some inventions derived at  
15 least in part from said accumulated ideas; or

(d) enabling receipt of contributions of said ideas for prospective entry into said database; combined with

(e) systematically establishing contractual obligations by contributors of said ideas to said database to transfer property rights to inventions derived at least in part from  
20 said accumulated ideas to transferees other than contributors of ideas from which said invention was at least in part derived; or

(f) enabling ideas contributed to said database to be integrated within said computer database to thereby facilitate derivation of inventions from said integrated

ideas; combined with

(g) systematically establishing contractual obligations by contributors of said ideas to said database to transfer property rights to inventions derived at least in part from said accumulated ideas; combined with

5 (h) systematically establishing contractual obligations by said contributors to permit immediate public disclosure of said ideas contributed by said contributors; or  
step (d) combined with

(i) systematically establishing contractual obligations by contributors of said ideas to said database to transfer property rights to inventions derived at least in part from said  
10 accumulated ideas to a proprietor of said database or to a party in concert with said proprietor; or

step (h) combined with

(j) effecting transfer of property rights to inventions derived at least in part from said accumulated ideas to transferees other than contributors of said ideas from which  
15 said invention was at least in part derived; or

step (h) combined with

(k) systematically effecting transfer of property rights to inventions derived at least in part from said accumulated ideas to a proprietor of said database or to a party in concert with said proprietor; or

20 (l) establishing contractual obligations by contributors of said ideas to said database to transfer property rights to inventions derived at least in part from said accumulated ideas, wherein upon establishing said obligations the transferees are not identified; or

step (h) combined with

(m) requiring persons to enter into a membership as a prerequisite for viewing a portion of said database containing at least some of said accumulated ideas; or

step (h) combined with

5 (n) requiring contributors of ideas for prospective entry into said database to enter into a membership as a prerequisite for contributing ideas for entry into said database; or

step (h) combined with

(o) systematically entering into said database all ideas contributed for entry into said database; or

10 step (g) combined with

(p) systematically entering into said database ideas contributed for entry into said database without requiring any contributor of said ideas to have subject matter expertise as a prerequisite for entry of said contributions; or

step (g) combined with

15 (q) facilitating preparation and/or filing of patent applications for at least some of said derived inventions; or

step (h) combined with

(r) requiring contributors of ideas to said database to have subject matter expertise as a prerequisite for contributing ideas for prospective entry into said database; or

20 (s) establishing contractual obligations by contributors of said ideas to said database to transfer property rights to inventions derived at least in part from said accumulated ideas, wherein said transfer is for actual economic gain; combined with

(t) selectively entering only some of said contributed ideas into said database; or

step (m) combined with step (g) combined with step (t); or  
step (r) combined with step (g) combined with step (t); or  
step (n) combined with step (g) combined with step (t); or  
step (f) combined with step (g) combined with step (t).

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69. A computer readable storage medium(media), comprising computer executable instructions for causing a computer(s) to manage ideas, wherein the instructions cause the computer(s) to perform the steps of:

(a) maintaining a computer database for accumulating ideas for prospectively  
10 patentable inventions, wherein said ideas include needs and requirements of said inventions; and

(b) systematically establishing contractual obligations by contributors of said ideas to the database to transfer property rights to inventions derived at least in part from said accumulated ideas, wherein said transfer is for contingent economic gain.

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70. A computer readable storage medium(media), comprising computer executable instructions for causing a computer(s) to manage ideas, wherein the instructions cause the computer(s) to perform the steps of:

(a) maintaining a computer database for accumulating ideas for prospectively  
20 patentable inventions, wherein said ideas include needs and requirements of said inventions; and

(b) providing contingent contractual rights to at least some inventions derived at least in part from said accumulated ideas.

71. A computer readable storage medium(media), comprising computer executable instructions for causing a computer(s) to manage ideas, wherein the instructions cause the computer(s) to perform the steps of:

(a) maintaining a computer database for accumulating ideas for prospectively  
5 patentable inventions, wherein said ideas include needs and requirements of said inventions;

(b) enabling ideas contributed to said database to be integrated within said database to thereby facilitate derivation of inventions from said integrated ideas;

(c) systematically establishing contractual obligations by contributors of said  
10 ideas to said database to transfer property rights to inventions derived at least in part from said accumulated ideas; and

(d) systematically establishing contractual obligations by said contributors to permit immediate public disclosure of said ideas contributed by said contributors.

15 72. A computer readable storage medium(media), comprising computer executable instructions for causing a computer(s) to manage ideas, wherein the instructions cause the computer(s) to perform the steps of:

(a) maintaining a computer database for accumulating ideas for prospectively  
20 patentable inventions, wherein said ideas include needs and requirements of said inventions;

(b) requiring persons to enter into a membership as a prerequisite for viewing a portion of said database containing at least some of said accumulated ideas; and

(c) systematically establishing contractual obligations by contributors of said



ideas to said database to permit immediate public disclosure of said ideas contributed by said contributors.

73. A computer readable storage medium(media), comprising computer  
5 executable instructions for causing a computer(s) to manage ideas, wherein the instructions cause the computer(s) to perform the steps of:

(a) maintaining a computer database for accumulating ideas for prospectively patentable inventions, wherein said ideas include needs and requirements of said inventions;

10 (b) requiring contributors of ideas for prospective entry into said database to enter into a membership as a prerequisite for contributing ideas for entry into said database; and

(c) systematically establishing contractual obligations by said contributors to permit immediate public disclosure of said ideas contributed by said contributors.

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74. A computer readable storage medium(media), comprising computer executable instructions for causing a computer(s) to manage ideas, wherein the instructions cause the computer(s) to perform the steps of:

(a) maintaining a computer database for accumulating ideas for prospectively  
20 patentable inventions, wherein said ideas include needs and requirements of said inventions;

(b) systematically entering into said database all ideas contributed for entry into said database; and

(c) systematically establishing contractual obligations by contributors of said ideas to permit immediate public disclosure of said ideas contributed by said contributors.

75. A computer readable storage medium(media), comprising computer  
5 executable instructions for causing a computer(s) to manage ideas, wherein the instructions cause the computer(s) to perform the steps of:

(a) maintaining a computer database for accumulating ideas for prospectively patentable inventions, wherein said ideas include needs and requirements of said inventions;

10 (b) systematically establishing contractual obligations by contributors of said ideas to said database to transfer property rights to inventions derived at least in part from said accumulated ideas; and

(c) systematically entering into said database ideas contributed for entry into said database without requiring any subject matter expertise as a prerequisite for said  
15 contributions.

76. A medium(media) according to Claim 71, 72, 73 or 74, wherein said permission is for immediate public disclosure of all said ideas contributed by said contributors.